

MacDONALD, W.H. [Booth's capture]

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

W. A. MacDonald

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LAST OF BOOTH TRACKERS DIES

Feb. 12-1933

W. A. MacDonald, in Party Which Found Lincoln's Assassin, Visited Here

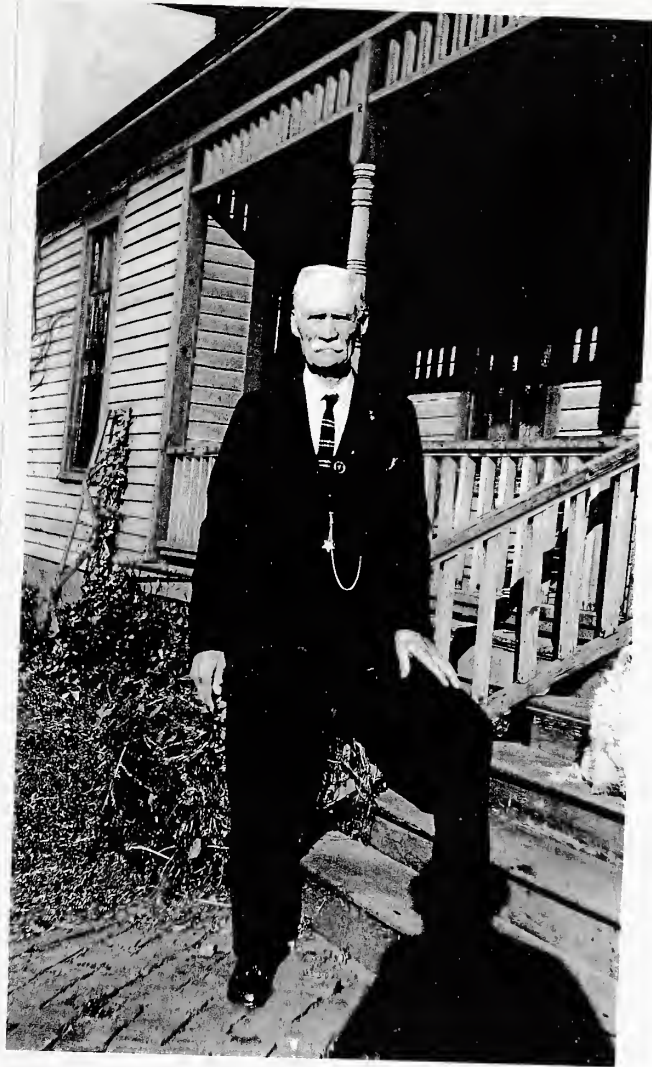
W. A. MacDonald, the last surviving member of that historic and much toasted squad of a dozen men who surrounded John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln, and saw one of their number shoot him as he defied the squad from a blazing barn in Bowling Green, Virginia, on April 27, 1865, died at the age of 88 at his home in Westminster, California, on last Sunday, the birthday of Lincoln, for whose assassin he made the search.

Mr. MacDonald was an uncle of Mrs. A. W. Hazelkamp, 873 West Main street, and had visited here several times, although lately he had been living in California. His home was in Chenoa, but when he entered the Civil war he enlisted in the Eighth Illinois cavalry from Bushnell. For some months he was in Lincoln's bodyguard.

MacDonald attended Ford's theatre the night before Lincoln was shot, and was shocked the next evening to hear of the shooting by Booth, a brilliant but erratic actor. The Eighth Illinois was called into action, and sent out in squads to hunt down Booth. They tracked him from the farm of one Virginia friend to a barn in Bowling Green, where he and his conspirator, Daniel Herold, lay hiding.

Herold came out when the twelve men surrounded the building, but Booth cursed and refused. The captain ordered the men to fire the barn, but not to shoot. As the fire began, the men could see Booth's silhouette, a crutch in one hand and a carbine in the other. But suddenly Boston Corbett, a sergeant, stuck his gun through a crevice and shot Booth through the skull, almost in the same spot where he shot Lincoln. Booth lay in torture for two hours until the flames went out. His body was then returned to a rude grave.

MacDonald often scoffed at stories that Booth escaped and was in Texas or some part of the country. He had seen him die, and was sure of the man, for a small tintype had been given everyone in the search for the assassin.



87 yrs old in
1931

Passed away
Feb. 12 - 1933



Garnette Haselkamp

